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Bismarck. By C. GRANT ROBERTSON, Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford. [Makers of the Nineteenth Century.] (New York: Henry Holt and Company. 1919. Pp. xii, 539. \$2.25.)

MR. ROBERTSON has written in many respects the best—the most thoughtful—study of Bismarck which has appeared in any language. In English, Headlam's otherwise excellent biography was written too close to Bismarck's dismissal in 1890 to allow of a proper perspective, and it treats too scantily the period after 1871. Munroe Smith's little volume was avowedly only a sketch. Lowe's two volumes are neither critical nor up-to-date. In German, Hahn's five volumes are enriched with much documentary material, but are not very readable. Lenz's reprint of his article in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* is a masterly critical piece of work on Bismarck in 1848, at Frankfort, and as Prussian minister-president from 1862 to 1871, but is not very full on the chancellor of the German Empire after 1871. Egelhaaf's scholarly volume is much fuller on the period after 1871, but not so well written as Lenz's book. Erich Marcks, who had access to the Bismarck family papers denied to others, began a readable and scholarly work which was expected to be the definitive biography of Bismarck; but by 1914 he had published only the first volume, which covers no more than the life of the "tolle Junker" up to 1848. In French, Paul Matter, with the space of three large volumes at his disposal, has written an admirable standard biography, based on the sources, full of details fascinatingly told, and remarkably objective and impartial in judgment; but few persons outside the guild of historians are likely to read three large volumes of biography, even when written with the Gallic artistry of which M. Matter is a delightful master.

Mr. Robertson's *Bismarck*, as he says in his preface, "does not profess to be a history of Germany from 1815 to 1890, nor is it specifically a biography" of the ordinary type. It tells relatively little of Bismarck's family relations, often departs from chronological sequence, and is not unduly burdened with personalia and detail. It is rather an appreciation, in approximately biographical form, of Bismarck's statecraft and of Bismarck himself as one of the makers of modern Europe. As to proportion, there are nearly as many pages to the period after, as before, 1871. It tells English readers more than they usually hear of the influence of philosophy and ideas upon Bismarck and the German people. For no one knew better than Bismarck that the theories and ideals of the aristocracy of intellect were making the Germany and the Germans of his day. His debt to the "ideologues", as Meinecke has shown, was greater than he ever admitted. The alleged originality of his solution of the federal problem in 1866 and 1871 consisted in an adaptation from principles suggested by the despised Liberal leaders of 1848, and the Bismarckian adaptation would have been impossible but for the intellectual travail of the "ideologues" between 1848 and 1871. Hence Mr. Robertson protests against the conception of Bismarck simply as a

demonic man of action, shaping German and European destiny merely by his titanic will and brute force. He shows him also as a man of titanic brain, fighting for fifty years a truceless battle of ideas with German Jacobins, Liberals, Catholics, Socialists, Pan-German nationalists, and anti-German cosmopolitans.

Mr. Robertson has generally a good *flair* for obscure motives or historical secrets hidden in the archives. He makes very shrewd inferences, for instance, in regard to the war-scare of 1875 and the Reinsurance Treaties with Russia (to which he devotes an acute appendix), as is shown by the later and fuller articles of J. V. Fuller and Serge Goriainov in recent numbers of this *Review*. Occasionally, however, his shrewdness overshoots the mark, as in the case of the Schnaebele affair of 1888. Misled perhaps by a phrase of Debidour's (*Histoire Diplomatique*, I. 114), Mr. Robertson ventures the conclusion (p. 460) "that the 'Schnaebele incident' was deliberately planned [by Bismarck], possibly to provoke the French into a serious indiscretion, certainly to assist the passage of the Army Bill by driving into the German elector's mind the peril from France". Unfortunately for Mr. Robertson, his venture involves an anachronism. Elections favorable to Bismarck had already taken place on February 21 and March 2, and the Army Bill had been passed with an overwhelming majority on March 11; it was not until three weeks later, on April 20, that the French police agent stepped across the frontier in Alsace and was instantly arrested and imprisoned. Equally doubtful may be the author's similar opinion that the war-scare of 1875 was employed by the chancellor "to lash up German opinion and influence the Reichstag" at a critical stage in the *Kulturkampf*.

One of the most interesting parts of the book is the information and inference which the author gleans from the critical study of the utterances of Bismarck after his dismissal. In these one sees Bismarck severely criticizing the policy of his successors, Caprivi and Hohenlohe, and obviously Kaiser William II. As these policies were in part at least a continuation and completion of Bismarck's own work, his action raises many nice questions for the historian. How far did Bismarck genuinely change his mind in the retrospect of old age and political retirement? How far, for instance, would he have gone in backing Austria in the Balkans? As far back as 1873 (*cf.* p. 353) he appears to have contemplated that "diversion" of Austria toward the Balkans which found its first marked outward expression in his securing for Austria the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878. Yet a month after his dismissal and after Caprivi's failure to renew the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia (thereby opening the way for the very thing Bismarck had always carefully prevented—the alliance of Russia and France), Bismarck wrote in the *Hamburger Nachrichten*: "Austria cannot hope to obtain Germany's support for promoting her ambitious plans in the Balkan peninsula. These Austrian plans have never been encouraged by Germany as long as Germany's foreign policy was directed by Prince

Bismarck." The Triple Alliance, he kept reiterating (*cf.* pp. 494-501), contemplated only mutual defense against possible attack and did not demand that Germany should support Austria's Balkan interests against Russia. Similarly, no one had done more than Bismarck himself to emasculate the Reichstag and prevent the valuable development of parliamentary responsibility and parliamentary control over foreign policy. Yet after 1890 he complains,

The most disquieting feature for me is that the Reichstag has abdicated its position. We suffer everywhere from bureaucracy. . . . To strengthen the Reichstag the responsibility of ministers should be increased. . . . When I became minister the Crown was threatened by the people. Hence I strove to strengthen the Crown against Parliament. Perhaps I went too far in that direction. We now require a balance of power within Germany, and I believe that free criticism is indispensable to the monarchy.

How far, one wonders, if Bismarck had remained in power, would he, or could he, have altered or reversed the policies which he himself inaugurated. These are nice questions, of infinite difficulty and complexity, which Mr. Robertson touches upon, but wisely refrains from attempting to answer with finality.

The sources from which the author writes are chiefly the great collections of Bismarck material which have been edited by Busch, Horst Kohl, Poschinger, Penzler, and others. He is also thoroughly familiar with the mass of memoirs and the secondary works. Though trained under Lavissee, he studied and visited many times in Germany and had opportunity to talk with soldiers and politicians who had known Bismarck. His volume is the result of many years of study and reflection before there was a thought of war. It is written *sine ira et studio*. He makes Bismarck a living, human being, extenuating, to be sure, none of his grossness or arrogance, but nevertheless deeply appreciating his genius, his greatness, and all that was tender and sincere in him. History written with such sympathy and poise, and on such a subject, is one of the best means of aiding a distraught world to reach a sound judgment on the causes which lay behind the Great War.

SIDNEY B. FAY.

Weltgeschichte seit der Völkerwanderung. Von THEODOR LINDNER, Professor an der Universität Halle. Band IX. (Stuttgart and Berlin: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger. 1916. Pp. xiv, 524. M. 6.50.)

PROFESSOR LINDNER'S work represents the last volume of a history of the world since the barbarian invasions, and covers the period from 1860 to the outbreak of the war in 1914. The author states that he has limited his treatment of the period to its political development, although he has allowed one short chapter to Socialism and to the Catholic church.